

SITUATION REPORT NO. 09
INCIDENT NO. 97-001
DATE: August 1, 1997 TIME: 9:00 a.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Flood - Devils Lake.
2. DEATH AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGE: Devils Lake had risen to 1,442.95 feet MSL on July 31, 1997. Heavy rainfall over the Devils Lake Basin and increased inflows into the lake are contributing to a rising lake level.

The updated National Weather Service forecast calls for Devils Lake to peak near 1,443.5 feet MSL in fall to early winter. The average July rainfall in the Devils Lake Basin amounts to 2.66 inches. However, during the first 15 days of July, rainfall amounts totaled 5.17 inches, nearly double the July average. The northern portion of the Basin received more than 10 inches of rain. Because current soil moisture is high, more runoff has been occurring. The additional rainfall and runoff has contributed to a lake level increase of six inches since mid-June. The forecast is based on assumed normal precipitation and evaporation rates until the crest. Increased inflows are offsetting evaporation rates.

A recent analysis by the Department of Health indicates that the water quality of Devils Lake remains nutrient rich, but has significantly improved since 1993. The Department of Health monitors water quality at nine sites on the Devils Lake chain of lakes. The latest analysis took place July 7-8.

Although heavy rains have caused temporary road closures and suspension of work, contractors working in the Devils Lake Basin have been able to restore traffic shortly after rains have stopped. High winds, however, continue to cause damage to projects where contractors have not yet placed riprap slope protection.

Contractors are having some problems in obtaining haul routes for bringing materials, primarily riprap stone and gravel, to their project sites. In some cases, most desirable haul routes are under water. In other cases, paved roads with light surfacing could be heavily damaged by the hauling operations. Also, in some cases, contractors have to haul materials across other construction areas, which causes traffic congestion and delays. Contractors are active in trying to achieve solutions to these problems.

Ramsey County Rural Utility System lost four accounts in Eagle Bend after a lift station became inundated on July 14. The affected homeowners have installed alternate systems. The utility has lost 170 of 540 accounts because of flood-related problems. Another customer was required to close down his sewer line after his dike was damaged by flood waters.

The Nelson County Emergency Manager continues to receive calls about farm-related problems created by inundation of crops, pastures, roads and basements. A farm family living northwest of Lakota recently moved to town because of problems created by flooding.

4. RESOURCES COMMITTED:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: No change from previous reports.
6. MAJOR ACTIONS: A State Flood Coordination Center meeting was held in Devils Lake, July 24, 1997. Following is a summary of information reported during that meeting.

N.D. State Water Commission

The total 1997 storage obtained to date through the Available Storage Acreage Program (ASAP) remains at 22,000 acre feet on 165 sites, or 13,500 acres in the Devils Lake Basin.

As part of continuing efforts to evaluate plans for an outlet for Devils Lake, the SWC on July 22 endorsed the Peterson Coulee outlet plan to route lake water to the Sheyenne River. Preliminary plans call for using a combination of pumped storage, pipeline and open channel components with a design flow capacity of 300 cfs.

N.D. Department of Health

The N.D. Department of Health is expediting water quality reviews for Section 404 permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Permits approved to date include flood protection construction projects underway in the Devils Lake Basin.

Department of Health employees are studying the biological and environmental impacts of diverting Devils Lake water into the Sheyenne River. The study is part of a cultural, economic and environmental analysis by the USACE of the Devils Lake outlet plan.

A recent review by the Department of Health found that the municipal wastewater treatment program for the city of Devils Lake was in compliance with its permit conditions. Routine and compliance monitoring is an ongoing process for all municipal discharges into the Devils Lake Basin.

N.D. Game and Fish Department

A new boat ramp has been installed on the western edge of Six Mile Bay. The single-wide-vehicle concrete ramp was constructed to 1,450 feet MSL. The contractor was scheduled to complete gravel work on the ramp on July 25. The Game and Fish planned to have the ramp operational for the July 25-27 weekend.

N.D. Department of Transportation

N.D. Department of Transportation (N.D. DOT) officials report work on grade raises on state highways around Devils Lake is progressing satisfactorily. Work is in the final stages at grade raises on N.D. Highway 20 at Mission Bay and on N.D. Highway 19 at Six Mile bay. However, officials for the Devils Lake District Office are concerned about progress on grade raises on N.D. Highway 20 at the Narrows and near the southern portion of Camp Grafton. They anticipate that the highway will be opened at the end of August for limited hours to allow for school bus traffic.

N.D. DOT engineers are progressing with design work for construction of a high-level bridge on N.D. Highway 57 at the Narrows. This project is currently on a February 20, 1998, bid letting schedule. The bridge, if constructed, would be built to 1,460 feet MSL and would span the lake for one mile. Estimated cost is \$13 million.

The Mauvais Coulee crossing on N.D. Highway 19 received its final asphalt prime coat this week. The Devils Lake District Office staff expects work to begin soon on two other grade raises, east and west of Mauvais Coulee. These low-lying areas will be elevated to 1,448.5 feet MSL.

A number of projects in the Devils Lake District will be let in either August or September. These are mostly small projects involving culvert repairs, slope damage repair or installation of riprap. These projects will keep district construction forces very busy until winter since the goal is to have the areas repaired in preparation for the 1998 spring runoff.

N.D. Highway Patrol

The N.D. Highway Patrol, through the visibility of its troopers and enforcement measures, continues to encourage safe travel on N.D. Highway 19, U.S. Highway 281 and the Woods-Rutten Road. Because of dust problems, the Highway Patrol is encouraging motorists to turn their vehicles' headlights on when traveling on the Woods-Rutten Road.

North Central Planning Council

North Central Planning Council staff members continue to work with the Urgent Need Temporary Diking Program, which pays for one-half of a homeowner's diking expenses up to a maximum of \$2,000. Of the \$190,000 of project funds, approximately \$40,000 is still available.

Council staff members are also assisting the Office of Intergovernmental Assistance (OIA) officials with a snow and flood damage assessment survey of rural cities and counties. Although not all cities and counties returned their surveys, the partial list of damages still totals more than \$158 million. Of this total, \$100 million was from a six-county region, including Ramsey, Benson, Eddy Cavalier, Towner and Rolette. Results of the assessment were provided to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to compete for the remaining \$390 million of the Supplemental Disaster Funds. The state is asking for an additional \$40 million for projects in rural areas.

The Council has submitted an application to OIA for \$313,000 in funds to repair the Ramsey County Rural Utility System's sewer system. The project is estimated to cost \$913,000. USACE officials have budgeted \$600,000 for the project and are conducting a feasibility study.

OIA has approved an application submitted by the Council for \$135,000 in funds for the city of New Rockford's Watermain Replacement Project. Total project cost is estimated at \$390,500. An environmental review is in progress.

The Council continues to assist and direct county and city officials, businesses and homeowners to possible sources of assistance for disaster-related costs.

Indian Health Service, U.S. Health and Human Services

A contractor who was awarded a \$124,800 contract to install riprap at the St. Michael's lagoon has prepared the site. Workers have also completed dirt work for constructing an access road. Placement of riprap should begin the July 27-August 2 week.

Indian Health Service (IHS) has awarded a \$75,347 contract for replacing seven deteriorated septic drain fields. Of these, three were damaged by flood waters. IHS hopes to replace 12 drain fields in the coming months.

Ramsey County Emergency Management

Homeowners living in the Devils Lake floodplain continue efforts to relocate their homes. To date, 127 homes have either been moved or are scheduled to be relocated soon.

County officials expect to receive a draft copy of a feasibility study by the USACE by July 28. The study examines the possibility of extending the western edge of the city of Devils Lake's levee system to include the Creel Bay area.

Plans to increase the height of lake level protection system for the city of Devils Lake could cost \$36 million, the county emergency manager reported. However, a disaster supplemental bill recently passed by the U.S. Congress allocated \$28 million. Plans call for raising the levee's top elevation from 1,450 feet MSL to 1,457 feet MSL.

Nelson County Emergency Management

The city of Michigan issued a Disaster Declaration on July 16 because of the high volume of rainfall that has accumulated in northern Nelson County. The ground is heavily saturated and the holding capacity of area lakes, sloughs and fields has been exceeded. Three nearby lakes, Rose, Laretta and Mary have formed into one lake, threatening the city of Michigan. Another six to eight inches of rain would allow the lakes to drain directly into the city. The city recently spent \$750,000 on its sewer, water and road systems, which could be damaged by the water.

Federal, state and local representatives have met to plans to alleviate water problems confronting the city of Michigan.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The next State Flood Coordination Center meeting will be held August 21, 1997, at 1:30 p.m. at the Ramsey County Courthouse basement meeting room.

The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>".

Douglas C. Friez, State Director